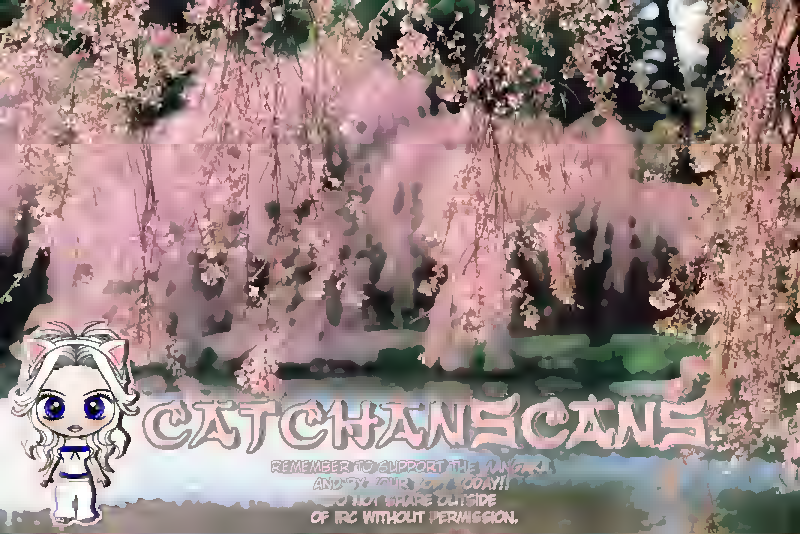
CATCHANSCANS
REMEMBER TO SUPPORT THE MANGAKA
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OF IRC WITHOUT PERMISSION.

8
TENSHI JA NAI!!
I'm No Angel!
Story & Art by
Takako Shigematsu

TENSHI JA NAI!!

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I'm No Angel!

Volume 8

Story and Art by
Takako Shigematsu

go!comi

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TENSHI JA NAI!!

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VOL. 8

Concerning Honorifics

At Go! Comi, we do our best to ensure that our translations read seamlessly in English while respecting the original Japanese language and culture. To this end, the original honorifics (the suffixes found at the end of characters' names) remain intact. In Japan, where politeness and formality are more integrated into every aspect of the language, honorifics give a better understanding of character relationships. They can be used to indicate both respect and affection. Whether a person addresses someone by first name or last name also indicates how close their relationship is.

Here are some of the honorifics you might encounter in reading this book.

-san: This is the most common and neutral of honorifics. The polite way to address someone you're not on close terms with is to use "-san." It's kind of like Mr. or Ms., except you can use "-san" with first names as easily as family names.

-chan: Used for friendly familiarity, mostly applied towards young girls. "-chan" also carries a connotation of cuteness with it, so it is frequently used with nicknames towards both boys and girls (such as "Na-chan" for "Natsu").

-kun: Like "-chan," it's an informal suffix for friends and classmates, only "-kun" is usually associated with boys. It can also be used in a professional environment by someone addressing a subordinate.

-sama: Indicates a great deal of respect or admiration.

Sempai: In school, "sempai" is used to refer to an upperclassman or club leader. It can also be used in the workplace by a new employee to address a mentor or staff member with seniority.

Sensei: Teachers, doctors, writers or any master of a trade are referred to as "sensei." When addressing a manga creator, the polite thing to do is attach "-sensei" to the manga-ka's name (as in Shigematsu-sensei).

Onii: This is the more casual term for an older brother. Usually you'll see it with an honorific attached, such as "onii-chan."

Onee: The casual term for older sister, it's used like "onii" with honorifics.

[blank]: Not using an honorific when addressing someone indicates that the speaker has permission to speak intimately with the other person. This relationship is usually reserved for close friends and family.

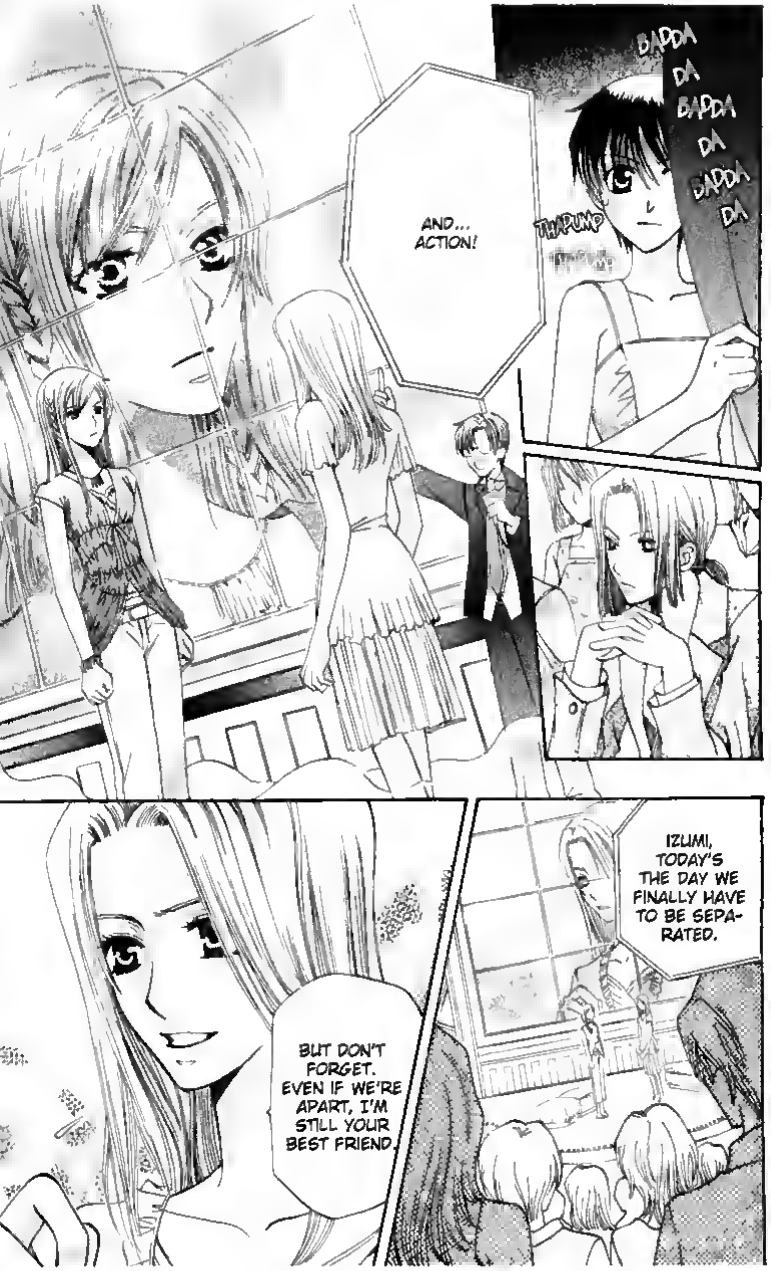
SCENE 36

TENSHI JA NAI!!
I'm No Angel!

...WILL MOVE ON TO THE FINALE!
WHOEVER HAS THE BEST CHEMISTRY WITH IZUMI KIDO-CHAN...
BEST CHEMESTRY? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
WAAAAH!!
Da Ta Da Da!!
THE THEME IS "GOOD-BYES AND NEW BE-GINNINGS."
THE FIRST ROUND OF THE AUDITION WILL BE AN IMPROV DRAMA PIECE.
CLAP
Eeeee!
Kurobe-kuuuun!
CLAP
CLAP
Hibachi-saaaaan!
EACH WILL HAVE FIFTEEN SECONDS TO MEMORIZE A SCRIPT...
...AND THEN THEY'LL ACT IT OUT!
CLAP

Greetings

To those I'm meeting for the first time, and those I haven't seen in a while: Hello! I really appreciate you picking up "Tenshi Ja Nai!!" volume 8! It's the last volume already... Please enjoy all the way up to the very last page!


BADA DA BADA DA BADA DA
THUMP
AND... ACTION!
IZUMI, TODAY'S THE DAY WE FINALLY HAVE TO BE SEPARATED.
BUT DON'T FORGET. EVEN IF WE'RE APART, I'M STILL YOUR BEST FRIEND.

FIRST UP IS TOMOKO MISHIMA!
AT LEAST I'VE GOT THE FIGHTING SPIRIT IN MY HEART.
THEIR SCENE IS "THE BEST FRIEND."
JUST SO YOU KNOW, IZUMI-CHAN HAS NOT READ THE SCRIPT FOR THIS SCENE EITHER!
THAT MEANS...
THUMP THUMP
...IZUMI-SAN'S FACING THE SAME CHALLENGE...
...THAT WE FOUR ARE.

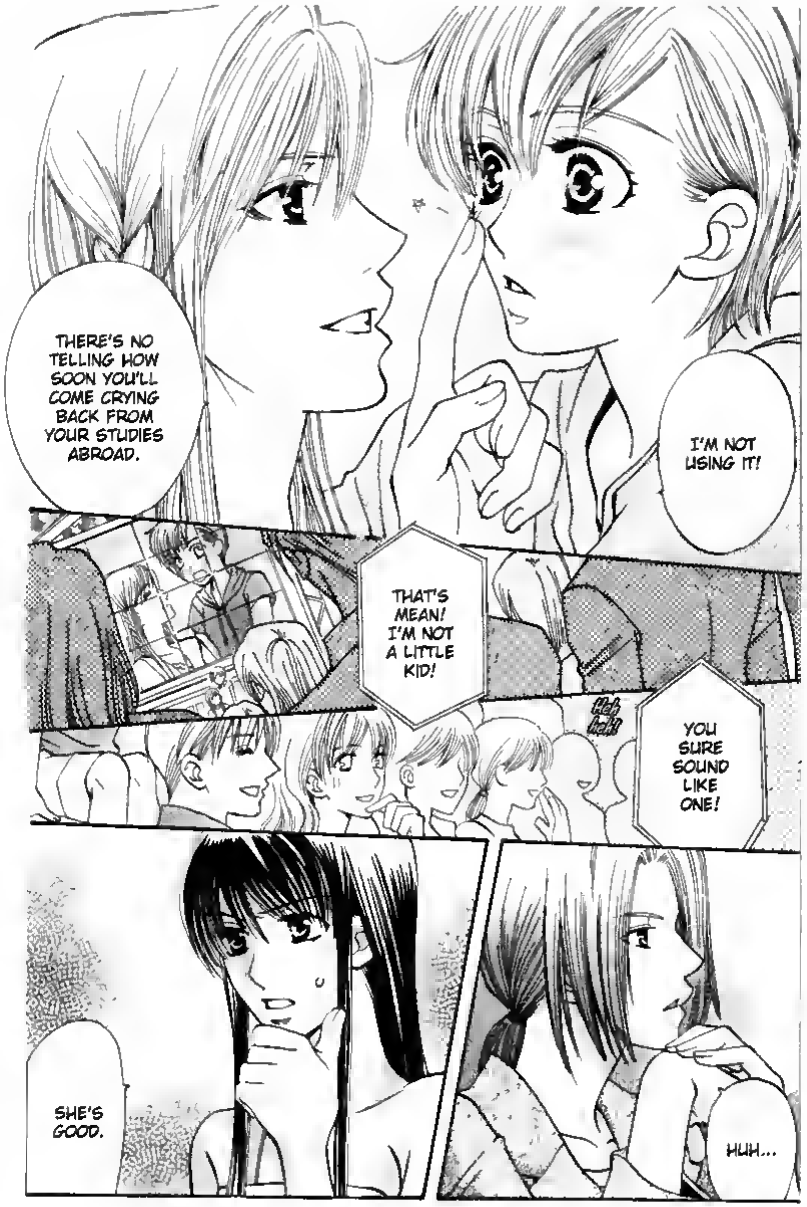
Wow...
THUMP
THUMP
IZUMI-SAN'S AMAZING!! HE'S SO BEAUTIFUL!!
GASP
TOMOKO ?
UH...
EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN'T BE SURE YOUR DREAMS WILL COME TRUE...
...YOU'RE STILL LEAVING THE ONLY HOME YOU'VE EVER KNOWN?

YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO GO?
OF COURSE!!
GAZE
THADUMP

BADDA DA BADDA DA BADDA DA
AND... ACTION!
AH, IT'S UEDA-SAN. GOOD LUCK!
IT MUST HAVE BEEN TOUGH FOR MISHIMA-CHAN TO BE THE FIRST ONE UP, BUT SHE REALLY GAVE IT HER ALL.
STEP
NEXT UP IS AI UEDA-CHAN. EVERY-BODY READY?
SISTER!
WHILE I'M GONE, YOU CAN USE MY ROOM, 'KAY?

HUH?
OH, SAITO-SAN.
O-OF COURSE. WHETHER OR NOT MY DREAM COMES TRUE ..
MISHIMA-SAN'S BEEN CHEWED UP AND SPIT OUT.
.....
IZUMI-SAN...
THE AUDIENCE ONLY HAS EYES FOR IZUMI KIDO.
THIS PERSON I'M GOING OUT WITH...
...IS SOOO AWESOME ...
IZUMI-SAN... FEELS SO FAR AWAY.

RRRUMBLE
ISN'T SHE BEING A LITTLE TOO CLINGY!?
THAT'S SOME COMPE-TITIVE SPIRIT!
SHUDDER
BUT IZUMI-SAN'S NOT A GIRL, AND UEDA-SAN'S SO CUTE...
OF COURSE, UEDA-SAN THINKS IZUMI-SAN'S A GIRL.
WHAT'RE THESE VICIOUS VIBES I'M FEELING?
...IF THEY END UP AS ROOMMATES...
SO THERE'S NO WAY SHE'S HUGGING HIM THAT WAY.


THERE'S NO TELLING HOW SOON YOU'LL COME CRYING BACK FROM YOUR STUDIES ABROAD.
I'M NOT USING IT!
THAT'S MEAN! I'M NOT A LITTLE KID!
Heh heh!
YOU SURE SOUND LIKE ONE!
SHE'S GOOD.
HUH...

はんSLAM
SINCE WHEN DO YOU TURN AND RUN WHEN YOU SEE MY FACE?

Oh, reeeeeeally.
YOU HAD URGENT BUSINESS IN THE EMERGENCY STAIRWELL?
SWEAT
SWEAT
I-I DIDN'T RUN.
I-I JUST WANTED TO COME HERE--

THEY'D BE TOGETHER TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY!
I-I CAN'T LOSE!!
WELL! THE JUDGES HAVE ALL AGREED THAT THE WINNER OF THE FIRST CHALLENGE IS AI UEDA-CHAN!

...EVERY-ONE BE PATIENT.
Eeek!
Hatachi-saaan!
Kuroha-kuuun!
WE'LL START THE SECOND CHALLENGE AFTER A FIFTEEN MINUTE BREAK, SO...

WHAT!?
L-LOOK!?
IZUMI-SAN, YOU'RE THE GUY WHO LOOKED LIKE A PERV, WITH UEDA-SAN HANGING ON YOU!
TURN
TH-THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, IZUMI-SAN.
WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK?
OH!
THUMP
OH HOOOOO... SO YOU'RE THAT, ARE YOU?
JEALOUS?
WHA...!?
BIII

W-WE WERE LOOKING FOR YOU AND, UH...
AH!
WHAT'S... GOING ON HERE?
NO WAY...!!

I-IZUMI-SAN! I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO THE AUDITION!
IF YOU KISSED THIS GUY AGAIN...
...MAYBE YOU'D REMEMBER.
!
GLITTER

I-IZUMI-SAN!
AND YOU TWO. WE'LL DISCUSS THIS LATER.
WHAT DO WE DO!? WE HAVE TO FIX THIS!
WE'RE ON, HIKARU.
GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO.
BUT YOU'D BETTER HAVE A GOOD EXPLANATION.
WHAT DO WE DO!? IF THEY KNOW THE TRUTH--
IZUMI-SAN!
IT'LL BE FINE. JUST WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF!

WE GOT CAUGHT!?
WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU'RE ABOUT TO GO ON! GET BACK TO THE STAGE!
Aaah!
HERE YOU ARE!
IZUMI-CHAN, YOU JUST CALLED YOURSELF "THIS GUY."

I'VE WORKED REALLY HARD TO GET HERE.
IT'LL BE OKAY.
IZUMI-SAN!
I'M NOT GONNA LOSE IT ALL, NOW.
WE CAN MANAGE ONE MORE.
Heh
WE'VE FOOLED THEM A MILLION TIMES.
DON'T WORRY.
BUT...

!!
SQUEEZE
HOW CAN I CONCENTRATE ON THE AUDITION...!?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT! I'LL THINK OF A WAY AROUND THIS.
BUT...!
IF THEY FIND OUT, WHAT'LL BECOME OF YOU, IZUMI-SAN!?
WE'VE WORKED SO HARD TO KEEP YOUR SECRET, HOW CAN WE LOSE IT ALL NOW!?
AND WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL!? YOU'LL HAVE TO QUIT!

WHAT!?
IT'S BLANK?
Izumi. Break up.
IT'S CALLED BEING SAFE INSTEAD OF SORRY.
TOSS
PLEASE DON'T HATE ME.
Heh heh.
CRUMPLE

THEY HAVE FIFTEEN SECONDS TO LEARN THEIR LINES.
BLANK
UH, FIRST LET'S HAVE THE SCRIPTS.
OKAY, ON TO THE SECOND CHALLENGE.
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
BLANK
BEGIN!
FLAP
...I CAN'T CONCENTRATE ON SOME SILLY AUDITION AT A TIME LIKE THIS!
IZUMI-SAN TOLD ME TO STAY FOCUSED, BUT...

THIS IS ALL MY FAULT, ISN'T IT?
I DIDN'T PUT MY WHOLE HEART INTO THIS AUDITION...
...AND BECAUSE OF THAT, IZUMI-SAN GOT FOUND OUT!
GASP
HIKA--

BADDA DA BADDA DA BADDA DA
AND... ACTION!
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
.....
MUFAMUF
MUFAMUF
MUFAMUF
WHERE YOU BREAK UP WITH YOUR LOVER.
WE START WITH YOUR LINE.
HIKARU ?
...NOW I'M REALLY MAD.
HAVING A BLANK SCRIPT, DOING THIS STUPID AUDIT-ION...
CUT!

I'D ONLY GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR DREAMS.
SHE HAS NO REASON TO IGNORE THE SCRIPT...
ISN'T THIS DIFFERENT FROM THE SCRIPT?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
THAT'S NOT IN THE SCRIPT.
THE SCRIPT...
...ISN'T THAT IMPORTANT.

I DON'T WANT TO BREAK UP.

SO...
...WE HAVE TO BREAK UP.
IZUMI-SA...

GET IN THE WAY!?
WHY MUST I CHOOSE... BETWEEN MY DREAMS... AND YOU, IZUMI-SAN?
I WANT TO HAVE BOTH!
YOU'RE JUST ACTING STUPID.
WITHOUT YOU, IZUMI-SAN, MY DREAMS MEAN NOTHING!

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
AH...
GOOD JOB.
OH. I'M SORRY IT DIDN'T FOLLOW THE SCRIPT.
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? DO YOU HEAR THAT APPLAUSE?
COME ON, IT'S SAITO-SAN'S TURN NOW.
GO TO THE GREEN ROOM FOR A BREAK.
R-RIGHT..

AND... SCENE!
GASP
OH, YEAH... WE WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF A SCENE...
YEAH!
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
THAT WAS JUST ACTING.
THE APPLAUSE HERE IN THE STUDIO IS OVERWHELMING! WHAT A PERFORMANCE!

TOTTER
?
THOUGH I AM SURPRISED, THAT SAITO GIRL'S PERFORMANCE PRETTY MUCH CRUMBLED.
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
Don't be ridiculous...
Y-YEAH...
WHAT IS IT? YOU'RE SO DOWN. CHEER UP.
MORE IMPORTANTLY, IZUMI-SAN...
WHAT DO WE TELL HABASHI-SAN AND KUROBE-SAN ABOUT WHAT THEY SAW?
KLATCH
I WAS JUST WONDERING ABOUT THAT.

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS JUST AN ACT...
...THE REJECTION I FEEL IS REAL...
KLATCH
CONGRATULATIONS ON ADVANCING TO THE FINAL ROUND.
IZUMI-SAN...

DROP THE ACT, IZUMI KIDO.
FUUU
YOU'RE A GUY.
RIGHT? IZUMI KIDO?

W-WE HAVE TO TELL THEM SOME-THING!!
I-IZUMI-SAN!
IZUMI-CHAN. HIKARU-CHAN...
HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN IT?

GASP
NOD
NOD
YEAH! TH-THAT'S RIGHT! WE'RE SORRY!
OBVIOUSLY, WE'D NEVER MIX PERSONAL STUFF INTO AN AUDITION.
OH, THAT? REHEARSAL.

MY IZUMI-CHAN...
SO LOVELY...
...AND A LITTLE QUEEN-TYPE (S).*
*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES
THADUMP
THADUMP
AND WHEN I REMOVE THAT IZUMI-CHAN'S CLOTHING...

KUROBE-SAN!!
CRASH
WHENEVER YOU'RE WITH HIKARU...
...I ALWAYS SAW YOU AS A GUY.
HE TOTALLY FOUND US OUT!!
End of Scene 36

TENSHI JA NAI!!
天使じゃない!!
SCENE 37
シーン

WHAT DO WE DO?
HE LOST EVERYTHING AND TRIED TO KILL HIMSELF, BUT FAILED...
IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
MY FATHER WAS CHEATED BY HIS FRIEND AND LEFT WITH HUGE DEBTS.
SO YOU DRESSED AS A GIRL AND WENT INTO SHOW BUSINESS, IZUMI-CHAN?
AND I NEEDED THE MONEY...
AKIZUKI WAS AN OLD FRIEND OF MY PARENTS.
AN ORPHANED SCHOOL KID DOESN'T HAVE A LOT OF OPTIONS FOR MAKING MONEY.
SO, HE WOUND UP IN A COMA.

HMPH.
LIES... THIS HAS TO BE A NIGHT-MARE...
SNAP OUT OF IT.
I STUFF MY BRA.
You got a problem with that?
TA-DAH!
YOGA
THEY KNOW IZUMI-SAN IS A GUY!
SHE IS A GUY!

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRONG TO FOOL EVERY-ONE, BUT...
...IZUMI-SAN'S GONE THROUGH SO MUCH TO GET HERE.

HIKARU.
IZUMI-SAN...
KNEEL
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BOW YOUR HEAD TO THEM OVER THIS

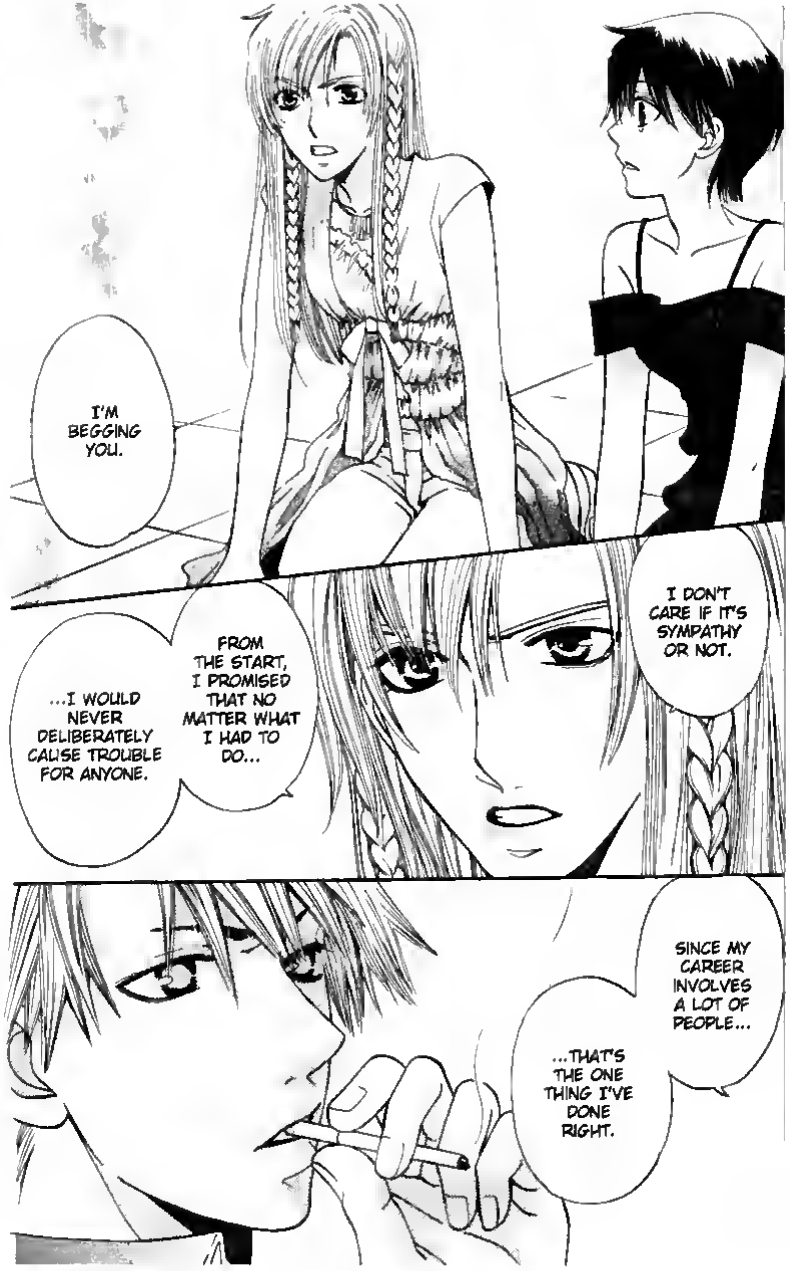
SO?
YOU THINK THAT STORY EARNS YOU OUR SYMPATHY?
BLUNT
IS WHAT I DID THAT BAD?
.....!

H-HIKARU!?
BOW

STAND
ぱっ
U-UM!

PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYBODY ABOUT IZUMI-SAN!!
H-HIKARU-CHAN.

NOOOO!!
SHAKE
I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU LIKE THAT, IZUMI-SAN.
SHAKE
SHAKE
DON'T BOW YOUR HEAD DOWN, IZUMI-SAN.
HUH?
...I DON'T LIKE IT!
IF YOU'RE NOT BEING YOUR HIGH AND MIGHTY SELF, IZUMI-SAN...
HMM.
PLEASE KEEP MY SECRET.


I'M BEGGING YOU.
...I WOULD NEVER DELIBERATELY CAUSE TROUBLE FOR ANYONE.
FROM THE START, I PROMISED THAT NO MATTER WHAT I HAD TO DO...
I DON'T CARE IF IT'S SYMPATHY OR NOT.
...THAT'S THE ONE THING I'VE DONE RIGHT.
SINCE MY CAREER INVOLVES A LOT OF PEOPLE...

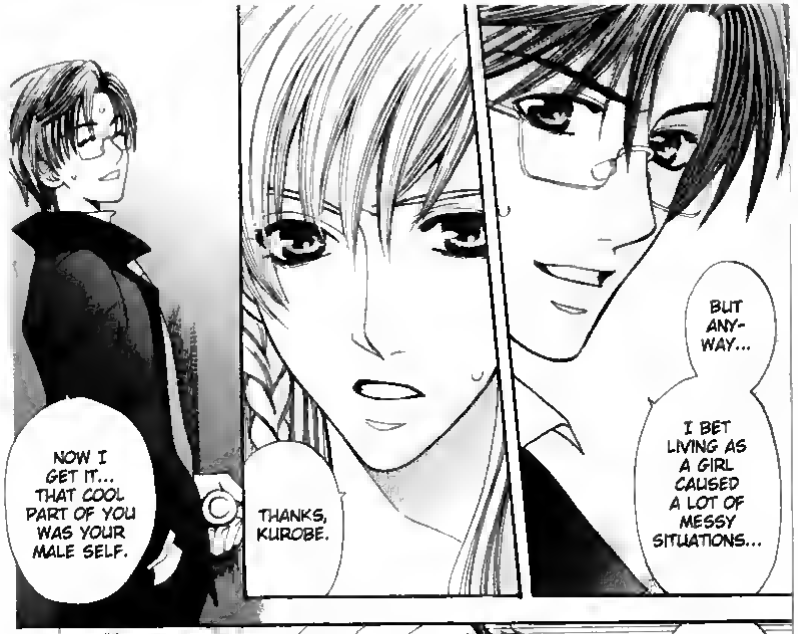
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! DON'T GET HER INVOLVED! THIS IS MY--
THEN YOU DON'T MIND BEING EXPOSED?
WE'RE GOING ON SOON. LET'S GO, KUROBE.
AH...
SLAM
HEY, HABASHI! WAIT A MINUTE!
SHEESH... HE'S SO...
KUROBE-SAN...
THOUGH I HAVE TO SAY I'M SHOCKED.
I REALLY LIKED YOU, IZUMI-CHAN.
IT'S LIKE MY HEAD'S STILL REELING, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WHAT...
UH... LISTEN, I WON'T SAY ANY-THING.

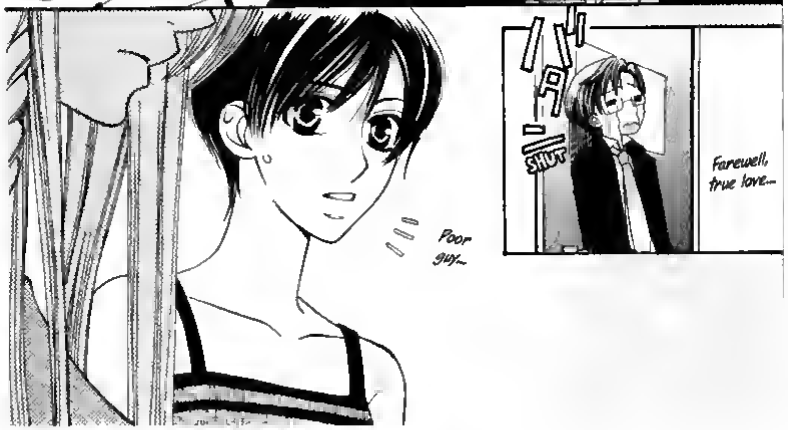
I HAVE NO PROBLEM STAYING QUIET.
R-REALLY!?
!!
I-IF I WIN...!?
HIKARU, IF YOU WIN THE AUDITION...
...I WILL KEEP THIS SECRET.

Let's Take a Relaxing Trip (1)

When I finished the last chapter of "Tenshi Ja Nai!!" my assistants and I went on a 2-day, 1-night trip. We met up at Tokyo Station at 6:00 am. Maybe it was too early, but on the Kinki Nippo Railway my assistant T-san, who'd joined us, was so quiet she was like a different person.

Anyway, we safely boarded the Shinkansen and arrived at a certain Mouse Kingdom. This long-winded report will continue later...


NOW I GET IT... THAT COOL PART OF YOU WAS YOUR MALE SELF.
THANKS, KUROBE.
BUT ANY-WAY...
I BET LIVING AS A GIRL CAUSED A LOT OF MESSY SITUATIONS...



PLEASE, WOULD YOU TURN THIS WAY?
IZUMI-SAN?
HOW WOULD IZUMI-SAN KNOW ABOUT THAT?
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
WHICH ONE OF THESE TWO WILL GET TO PARTNER UP WITH IZUMI-CHAN!?
OKAY, THANKS FOR WAITING EVERYONE!! NOW FOR THE FINAL COMPETITION!

PULL
I'VE GOT TO GET READY TOO SO--
DO YOU REMEMBER MODELING WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE KID?
HUH?
TRY TO REMEMBER HOW YOU WERE BACK THEN.

Waaaah!!
IT'S UP TO YOU TO CHOOSE OUR NEXT IDOL!
SO, COUNTING THE THREE HUNDRED MEMBERS OF OUR STUDIO AUDIENCE...
...PLUS THE PEOPLE IN REMOTE STUDIOS, IS A TOTAL OF ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE!
Osaka
Sendai
A POPULARITY CONTEST...?
I'M AT AN ALTOMATIC DISADVANTAGE!!
I mean, really!
You're so cute!!
Ueda, chaaaan! You can do it!!
Naturally Brilliant

THAT'S RIGHT, IZUMI-SAN HAD A COPY OF THAT POSTER I WAS IN AS A CHILD.
BUT WHY?
AND THIS LAST COMPETITION WILL BE...
Oooooh!!
Fight!
A POPULARITY CONTEST!!
?
POPU-LARITY?
IT INCLUDES THE FOOTAGE OF THE PRELIMINARY CONTEST A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO AND TODAY'S FINAL SELECTION!
IN TRUTH, THE CONTEST STARTED EVEN BEFORE THIS AUDITION DID.

UEDA-SAN...
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
THAT DREAM IS TO DEBUT WITH IZUMI KIDO-SAN.
I'LL DO MY BEST, SO BEST REGARDS!
NEXT IS HIKARU TAKABAYASHI.
.....!
IF I DON'T WIN THIS, IZUMI-SAN WILL...
I CAN'T LOSE...
THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT ME.

FIRST UP IS AI UEDA.
HAAH
HFF
OKAY.
OKAY, THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO APPEAL TO THE AUDIENCE.
SAY WHAT-EVER'S IN YOUR HEART INTO THE MICRO-PHONE.
ALSO, THE FOOTAGE OF YOU TWO TRYING YOUR BEST WILL BE RUNNING ON THE SCREEN BEHIND YOU.
...I DREAMED OF WHAT I WANTED TO DO IN THIS WORLD.
EVER SINCE I WAS A KID...
I WAS SO FRUSTRATED THAT I'M TOO SHORT TO MODEL...
...BUT I JUST KEEP TRYING, BECAUSE I CAN'T GIVE UP ON MY DREAM.

I SEE EVERYONE AROUND ME GIVING IT THEIR ALL, AND IT JUST MAKES ME PANIC...
MY POST-GRADUATION PLANS ARE A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT DO DO.

HIKARU...

...THE DREAM I HAD WHEN I WAS VERY LITTLE.
SUDDENLY, I REMEMBER...
BUT...
...THIS AUDITION HAS CHANGED SOMETHING INSIDE ME.

MUR-MUR
MUR-MUR
HIKARU-CHAN...

AT SOME POINT, I FORGOT THE DREAM I HAD WHEN I WAS LITTLE...
UNLIKE UEDA-SAN, I HAVEN'T ALWAYS HAD A DREAM AND DIDN'T COME HERE AFTER A LONG STRUGGLE.
I CAN'T LOSE.

THIS EXPERIENCE HAS INSPIRED ME...
...TO GO AFTER MY DREAM.
GASP
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
...I HOPE FOR THE BEST FROM YOU.
SO, UH! WITH THAT...

I'M GOING TO BECOME AN IDOL...
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT WAS AN OUT-RAGEOUS REASON...
...TO FOLLOW A DREAM.
...AND TONS OF PEOPLE WILL LOVE ME.
IT HAS INSPIRED ME TO START THINKING THAT MAYBE I CAN DO IT...

おおっ
OOOH!!
IT'S DARK...
AND THE WINNER IS AI UEDA!!
やったぁ
WAAAAH!

NOW, EVERYONE, PRESS THE SWITCH THAT SAYS TO YOU "THIS IS THE GIRL!"
BOTH CONTESTANTS' APPEAL TIME IS OVER!!
やった
YAAY!
CHAP CHAP CHA
AND IN THE END...
...THE ONE WHO'LL JOIN IZUMI-CHAN IN OUR MINI-SERIES...
AND SO ENDS OUR LONG AUDITION.
BOUM BOUM BOUM
...WILL BE WHICH GIRL?

Heh heh...
I GOTTA SAY, I'M GLAD WE FOUND OURSELVES SUCH A WONDERFUL GIRL.
YES...
IT'S JUST TOO BAD WE CAN'T USE HER THIS TIME AROUND.
IZUMI-SAN, I'M SORRY... I DIDN'T WIN.
DON'T APOLOGIZE.
BUT--

CHEER
HOW DOES IT FEEL?
BUT IT WAS A VERY CLOSE RACE.
503
I'M SO HAPPY! THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!
STILL, THE CLEAR WINNER IS UEDA.
CHEER
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
I'LL KEEP ON TRYING MY BEST!
HIKARU...

SHUT
NOW THEN.
OH THAT'S RIGHT. YASUKUNI-KUN'S LOOKING FOR YOU.
I NEED TO TALK TO IZUMI-CHAN, SO...
HUH? OH, OKAY.
IZUMI-CHAN, IS THERE SOMETHING YOU NEED TO TELL ME?

HABASHI AND KUROBE DISCOVERED MY SECRET.

MORE IMPORTANTLY... ARE YOU OKAY?
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW ARE WE GOING TO KEEP HABASHI-SAN AND KUROBE-SAN'S MOUTHS SHUT?
HEHEHE
GOOD JOB, YOU TWO!
THAT AUDITION WAS A FIGHT FOR YOU AND YOU ALONE.
DON'T FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR ME TOO, YOU SILLY GIRL.
TH-THANKS.
TMP TMP
STILL, YOU GOT RAVE REVIEWS! I'M SO PROUD I RECOMMENDED YOU!
OH, BUT IT'S SUCH A SHAME, HIKARU-CHAN!

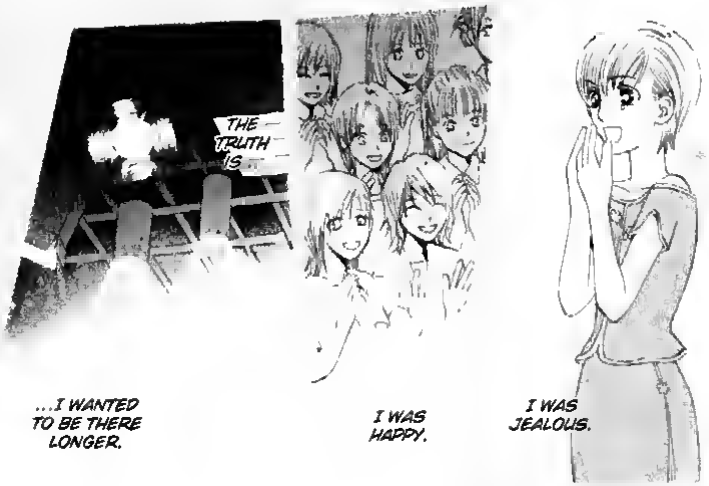
I DON'T GET WHY YOU'D GO SO FAR FOR HIM.
JUST WHAT KIND OF RELATION-SHIP DO YOU TWO HAVE?
HUH?
H-HE'S JUST VERY IMPORTANT TO ME...
UM... I'M THE ONE WHO LOST THE BET...
...SO I'LL DO ANYTHING, IF YOU JUST STAY QUIET!!
IS RUNNING AWAY A CONDITIONED RESPONSE WITH YOU?
FUUM
SURE...
IN THAT CASE, HIKARU...
...GO OUT WITH ME.

I SHOULD GO BACK TO IZUMI-SAN'S ROOM AND CALL HIM--
TURN
CHATTER
CHATTER
YASUKUNI-SAN MUST'VE GOTTEN CAUGHT IN THE CROWD, BUT WHERE IS HE?
CHATTER
Yeah!
She was so cute!
That was so much fun!
AH!
SUDDEN
DASH
BLOCK
TURN
BLOCK

WELL, DARN. I'LL STAY QUIET ABOUT THE HE-SHE.
Tch.
FOR NOW.
BUT NEXT TIME I GET A CHANCE, I MIGHT NOT BE SO NOBLE.
GASP
DRIP
DRIP
FUUU
IF THIS IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN GET YOU...
...THEN I'VE SUNK PRETTY LOW.
HABASHI-SAN...

WH-WHY!?
YOU SAID YOU'D DO ANYTHING, REMEMBER?
IZUMI-SAN'S THE ONLY ONE I...
BUT, IF HIS SECRET GETS OUT, THEN HE'LL...
...DISAPPEAR!
HUH?
WHAT'S THE POINT?
SIGH...

HAAH...
BUT KUROBE CRIED HIMSELF INTO A WRECK ALL NIGHT!


THE TRUTH IS...
...I WANTED TO BE THERE LONGER.
I WAS HAPPY.
I WAS JEALOUS.

SOB
...S-STOP...
I-I'M SORRY, I JUST CAN'T...
COME ON, DON'T CRY. YOU'VE GOT NO SENSE OF DECENCY.
TH-THANK YOU. I'M SO RELIEVED...
PAT
PAT
THAT'S NOT THE ONLY REASON THOUGH, IS IT?
GRIND
FUU...
SOB
RELEASE
HUH!? YOU DID, HABASHI-SAN?
I'M JUST KIDDING. YOU THINK I'D CRY, YOU DUMMY?
WHEN I LOST MY FIRST COMEDIAN CONTEST, I CRIED IN SECRET TOO.

THE LITTLE GIRL WHO'D WANTED TO BECOME AN IDOL ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...
...WAS CRYING INSIDE MY HEART.

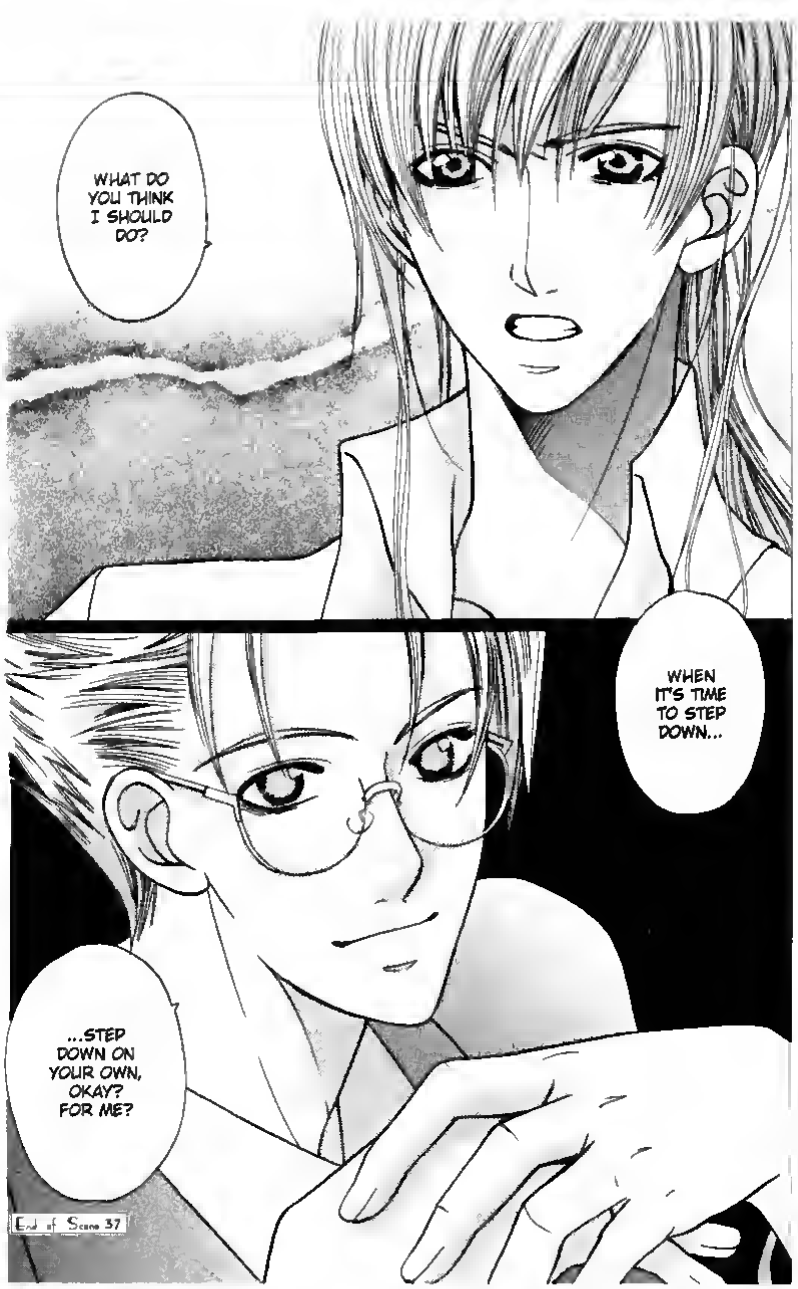
I WANTED TO BE CHOSEN...
...FOR ALL OF THOSE WHO'D CHEERED ME ON.
BUT BEFORE I REALIZED IT, THAT WASN'T ALL...

DASH
I'VE GOTTA GET TO THE HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY--
IZUMI-CHAN, THINK LONG AND HARD ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO AFTER THIS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
DON'T YOU THINK THE END IS COMING SOON?
OF YOUR JOB AS A GIRL.

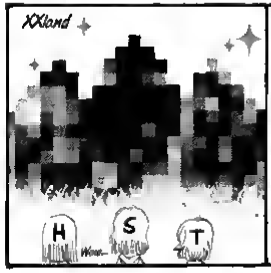
THE FACT THAT THE HABAKURO DUO FOUND YOU OUT IS PROOF ENOUGH.
IF YOUR SECRET GETS OUT...
...IT WON'T JUST BE YOU, BUT ALL OF US WHO'LL SUFFER.
IT'LL BE THE SCANDAL OF THE MILLENNIUM. YOU MADE A CONTRACT WITH THIS BUSINESS.
THAT'S--
AND ONCE PEOPLE FIND OUT THAT HIKARU-CHAN SHARED YOUR ROOM...
YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYING?

YES... AND BAD NEWS NEVER TRAVELS ALONE...
THE HOSPITAL?
I FIGURED I'D TELL YOU AFTER THE CONTEST.
THE TRUTH IS, I GOT A CALL FROM THE HOSPITAL.
YOUR FATHER'S NOT DOING SO WELL.

TENSHI JA NAI!!
天使じゃない!!
SCENE 38


WHAT DO YOU THINK I SHOULD DO?
WHEN IT'S TIME TO STEP DOWN...
...STEP DOWN ON YOUR OWN, OKAY? FOR ME?
End of Scene 37

TH...
THANKS...
HIKARU-SAN, I'M SO SORRY.
I'M SURE YOU WHO WERE HOME DON'T KNOW THIS, BUT I ALSO ATTENDED THE PRELIMINARY CONTEST.
I TRIED TO TELL IZUKI-SAN NOT TO MAKE SUCH A BIG DEAL, BUT...
OH... NO, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
Meeting to Give Praise to Hikaru Takabayashi's Brave Fight
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
HOW CAN I REFUSE WHEN SO MANY OF YOU WANT TO HEAR MY REPORT?



A Relaxing Trip (2)

It was great weather at the Mouse Kingdom. Maybe because it was a weekday, we didn't have to stand in any lines for more than fifteen minutes, and by midday we'd ridden almost all the rides. The most fun thing had to be when we rode a rollercoaster and I got to hear my assistant T-san's scream. She even yelled "Die!" at one of the characters during the ride... (sweat)

OH, HIKARU-SAN?
OH, YASU-KUNI-SAN.
DON'T YOU HAVE WORK WITH IZUMI-SAN TODAY?

DASH
HIKARU-SAN?
GASP
YOU MEAN HE WON'T BE BACK UNTIL TONIGHT?
HE'LL BE WITH THE COMPANY PRESIDENT ALL EVEN-ING, TOO...
HE'S HAD A LOT OF MEETINGS ABOUT THE MINI-SERIES, LATELY...
HUH...

VROOOM
I STILL HAVE TIME TO GET IT, THEN!

I COULDN'T APPEAR IN THE MINI-SERIES WITH IZUMI-SAN, BUT...
...I REALLY COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT THAT.
SOMETHING INSIDE OF ME CHANGED...
IT'S GOOD TO KEEP MYSELF BUSY, SO I DON'T HAVE TIME TO GET DEPRESSED.
AND THAT'S WHAT I SAID, THEN!
I LOST AT THE AUDITION.
SNEAK
RATTLE
RATTLE
GOOD THING THAT SHE CAN KEEP THE ENERGY SO HIGH ON HER OWN!

AM I REALLY DOING THIS?
NO...BUT UNLESS I TRY IT... I'LL NEVER KNOW...
Audition Guide
I HATE STANDING OUT, SO THERE'S NO WAY I SHOULD EVEN TRY TO BECOME A STAR!
Hikaru #2
Hikaru #1
SNATCH
AUDITION GUIDE?
OUCH ...
AH.. IT FEELS LIKE MY HEART'S TEARING ITSELF IN TWO.
NO, A PLAIN GIRL LIKE ME HAS NO CHANCE AT ALL. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!!

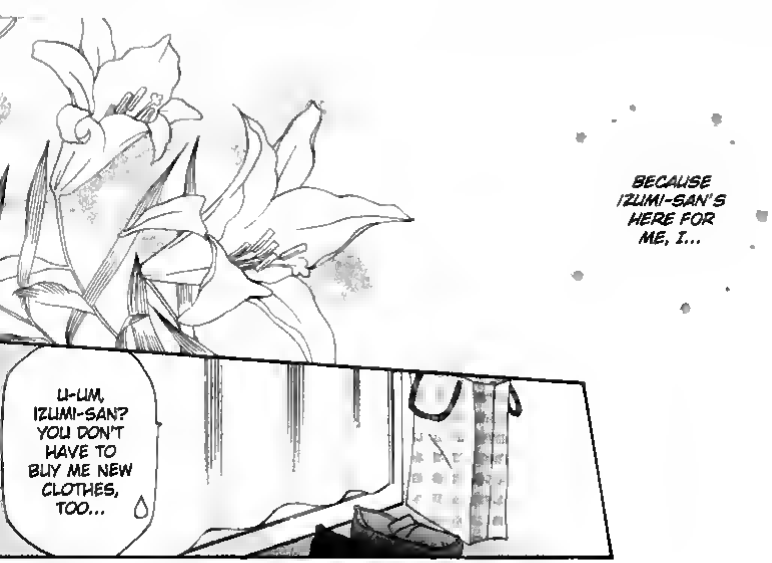
BOOK
Thank you very much!
I...I CAN'T BELIEVE I BOUGHT IT...
GASP
STARTLE
HUH? REALLY?
HUH? HAVE I SEEN THAT GIRL SOMEWHERE BEFORE?
DRIVER, PLEASE STOP THERE.
FLEE
Ah.

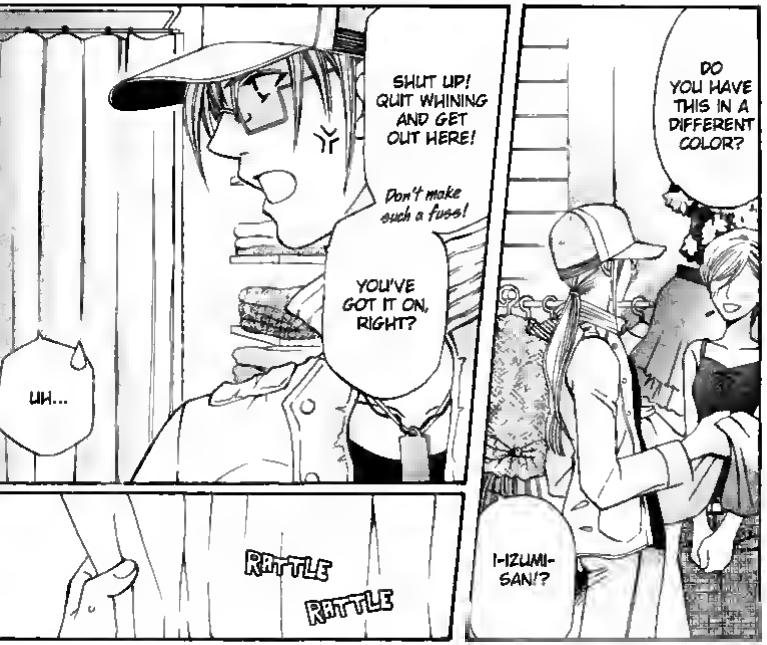
I... THAT IS...
THAT'S NOT TOO BAD.
YOU SHOULD ALWAYS GIVE EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH CHASING YOUR CHILDHOOD DREAM.

I-IZUMI-SAN!!
MY MEETING ENDED EARLY AND I SAW YOU AS WE DROVE BY.
WHAT'S THIS FOR?
OH... TH-THAT'S, UH...
HM...
FLIP
HEY.
Audition Guide
YOU MAKE IT TO THE END OF ONE AUDITION AND NOW YOU THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?
BLUUUUSH

POSING TOGETHER ?
NOON
POSING TOGETHER.
NOON
THE KID WHO POSED WITH HER.
Whaaaat!?
THAT WAS YOU, IZUMI-SAN!?
KEEP IT DOWN.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY CHILDHOOD DREAM?
AND WHY DO YOU HAVE THAT POSTER I DID?
UM... IZUMI-SAN! WAIT!
SINCE WE'RE IN THE CITY, LET'S STROLL AROUND.
?
POSING FOR THAT POSTER TOGETHER, WHEN WE WERE LITTLE KIDS.
POSING TOGETHER ...?
AND LOOKING AT IT I KINDA REMEMBERED...
REMEMBERED?
I FOUND ONE WHEN WE FIRST MET, AND I WAS INVESTIGATING YOU.


BECAUSE IZUMI-SAN'S HERE FOR ME, I...
U-UM, IZUMI-SAN? YOU DON'T HAVE TO BUY ME NEW CLOTHES, TOO...


SHUT UP! QUIT WHINING AND GET OUT HERE!
Don't make such a fuss!
YOU'VE GOT IT ON, RIGHT?
UH...
RATTLE RATTLE
DO YOU HAVE THIS IN A DIFFERENT COLOR?
I-IZUMI-SAN!?

meTshair
HOW ABOUT A BOB AND A PERM WHILE WE'RE AT IT?

OKAY! LET'S START REALIZING YOUR POTENTIAL!
HUH?
THADUMP
Like this. And like that.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT KID WAS IZUMI-SAN...
SHOCK
WHY DOES IT FEEL LIKE I MADE A PROMISE TO THAT KID?
HUH?

IZUMI-SAN...
THADUMP
THADUMP

TH-THANKS.
IT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU.
I KNEW IT. I'M A GENIUS.
HEY!
I'M JUST KIDDING.
WELL, IZUMI-SAN, IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE A JOKE!

OH, MY...
Gyaaah!
I'M SO EMBARR-ASSED...!
R-RIGHT!
DON'T LOOK DOWN!
L-LIKE THIS...?
Um...

WHA...!?
WHERE'D THAT COME FROM!? I WOULDN'T DO THAT!
JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE CUTE, DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN JUST LET GUYS TALK TO YOU.
I'M NOT GETTING FULL OF MYSELF! IZUMI-SAN, YOU'RE BEING RIDICULOUS!
AND DON'T GET TOO FULL OF YOURSELF.
I'M SORRY WHO!? YOU'RE THE ONE BEING UPPITY, IZUMI-SAN!!
I MEAN IT. DON'T BE SO UPPITY.

ISN'T THAT GIRL CUTE?
IRK IRK
IF SHE WAS ALONE, I'D TOTALLY TALK TO HER.
AW MAN, SHE'S WITH A GUY.
WHISPER WHISPER
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS...
GLARE
IZUMI-SAN, WHAT IS IT?
.....
SCARY ...
Whoa! Ack!
TUG TUG
HMPH
STARTLE
H-Hey, let's get outta here.

How rude!
How bold.
That'll keep them away
W-WE'RE IN PUBLIC!
SHUT UP.
L-LET'S GET HOME, IZUMI-SAN!
UWAH! HEY, DON'T PULL ME LIKE THAT!
NO MATTER WHAT I LOOK LIKE, I'M ME.
JUST LIKE NO MATTER HOW IZUMI-SAN DRESSES UP, HE STAYS HIMSELF.

Heh.
I WIN.

FANCY
OH, WELCOME BACK, IZUMI-SAMA.
EEK! HIKARU-SAN, DID YOU GET A MAKE-OVER!?
You look great!
BLUSH
OH, YOU! IT'S FUN BECAUSE YOU LEARN SO FAST, INUKAI-SAN.
YOU'RE ALMOST BETTER THAN ME, ALREADY.
THIS IS FUN. ONLY BECAUSE I HAVE A GOOD TEACHER.
.....
CH-CHISATO-SAN? WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
SHE'S BEEN TEACHING ME HANDI-CRAFTS.
.....
OH, INUKAI-SAN, I'LL HELP YOU.
WELL, I'LL POUR US SOME TEA.
It's cookies and stuff...
OH! UH, WE GOT THIS FOR YOU...

NO MATTER WHAT, FOR-EVER...
R... RIGHT.
I wanted to change first...
LET'S BRING YASUKUNI THE SOUVE-NIRS I BOUGHT.
RATTLE
YASUKUNI, YOU THERE?

SO I'M SURE...
...MY FEELINGS FOR IZUMI-SAN WILL STAY THE SAME.

SEVERAL DAYS LATER
SO, NOW...
?
KNOCK KNOCK
IF YOU TAKE THE X AND Y IN THIS FORMULA--
EXCUSE ME SENSEI, MAY I HAVE A SECOND?
GLITTER
COMING.
KIDO-SAN, PLEASE COME HERE.

OF COURSE HE DOES! WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
NO, IT'S JUST... YASUKUNI HAS HIS OWN RELATIONSHIPS IN HIS OWN WAY...
IZUMI-SAN? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
HUH?
I SWEAR...
?
IZUMI-SAN...?

WHEN DID...MY FATHER PASS AWAY?
YES.
CAN YOU LEAVE RIGHT AWAY?
UH... UM...
THIS MORNING... AROUND DAWN.
I SEE...
IZUMI-SAN...

THAT'S AKIZUKI-SAN...I WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENED..
HUH!?
YOU TOO, TAKABAYASHI-SAN.
Y-YES, MA'AM.
WHAT IS THIS? I DON'T THINK IT CAN BE GOOD...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANY-THING.
JUST BEING HERE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH SUPPORT.
...AL-RIGHT.
CREAK
I DON'T KNOW IF I'M STRONG ENOUGH TO SUPPORT IZUMI-SAN...
...BUT...

HIKARU-SAN, YOU TOO.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
THIS WAY PLEASE.
REACH
YASUKUNI-SAN, YOU'RE IZUMI-SAN'S ONLY FAMILY SO...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO IZUMI-SAN...
BUT I'M... NOT EVEN FAMILY...

...BEEN TRYING TO REMEMBER MY FATHER'S VOICE.
SINCE IT'S SO QUIET... I'VE...
I... CAN'T REMEMBER IT.
IT WAS A KIND AND GENTLE VOICE.
AL-WAYS.
YASUKUNI, DO YOU REMEMBER MY FATHER'S VOICE?
YES.
IT'S SO STRANGE... EVEN THOUGH WE HAD SO MUCH TIME TOGETHER BEFORE HE WENT TO THE HOSPITAL...
IZUMI-SAN...
...ALL I CAN HEAR IS THE HOSPITAL SOUND OF HIS BREATHING MACHINE.
BEFORE, I THOUGHT I COULD STILL HEAR HIS VOICE BUT...

PHEW
SQUEEZE
!
...IT'S SO QUIET.
SOME-HOW...

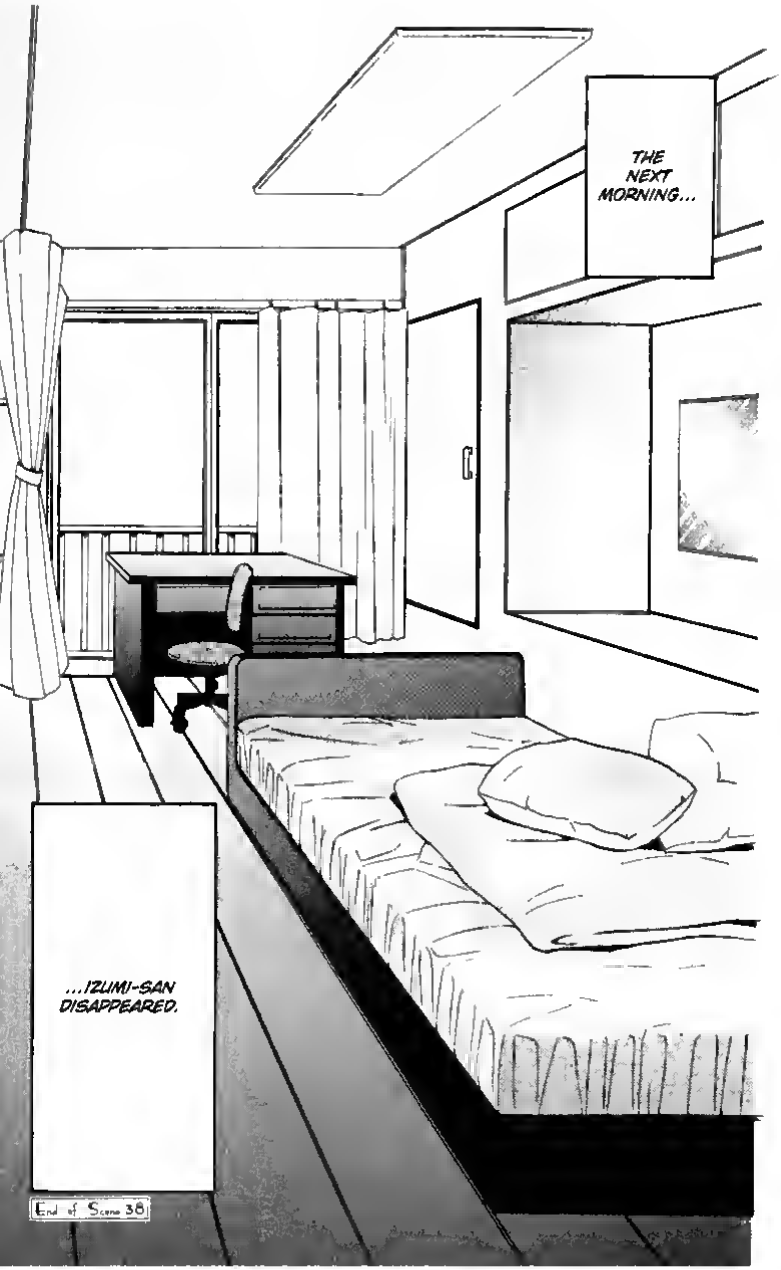
BUT THAT DIDN'T MEAN HE WASN'T SAD.
SO I STARTED TO WORRY A LOT.

ABOUT IZUMI-SAN'S CALM FACE.

IZUMI-SAN..
IZUMI-SAN ONLY CRIED A LITTLE...
THAT...
...MAKES ME SAD...

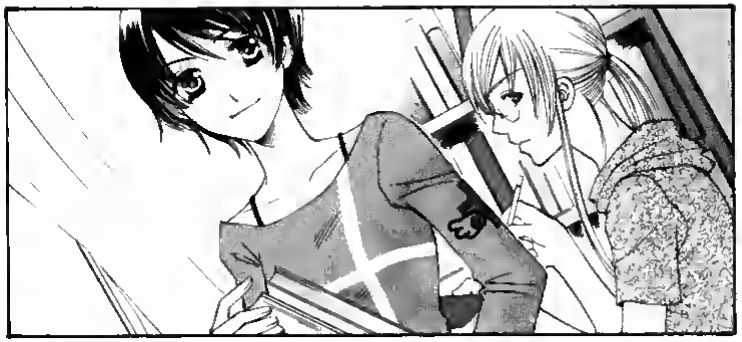
SMACK
WHAT ARE YOU? A MASO-CHIST?
Cuz you look like you're about to blow your fuse...
I MEAN, HOW DO I PUT THIS... THAT'S ALL I CAN DO FOR YOU NOW SO...
If that will help.
WHAT?
YOU CAN KICK ME ALL YOU WANT!
Heh.
YOU SILLY.
Ah! W-wait up!
STRUT
STRUT

LET'S GO HOME, HIKARU.
YEAH...
IZUMI-SAN.
"AM I BEING GOOD SUPPORT FOR YOU?"
"YOU CAN CRY IN FRONT OF ME."
UH...
HM?


THE NEXT MORNING...
...IZUMI-SAN DISAPPEARED.
End of Scene 38

ZZZ ZZZ
YEAH.
YOU OKAY NOW?

SCENE 39



A Relaxing Trip

Though we were freezing while watching the night parade, we were in high spirits when we got to a Bush Restaurant. Strangely enough H-san had the best arrangement of side dishes, all her favorite foods! Mine and T-san's were all brown... but come on T-san, you didn't have to try so many different curries...

WE CAN'T PANIC EVERYBODY OVER IZUMI-SAN'S ABSENCE.
IF THEY START LOOKING TOO DEEPLY, HIS SECRET WON'T BE SAFE...
I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE...
YEAH... YOU'RE RIGHT.
...WORRIED ABOUT IZUMI-SAN...
HIKARU-SAN...
AND ANYWAY! I'M SURE HE'S FINE!

HE'S NOT ANYWHERE ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.
AND HE'S NOT WORKING TODAY...
IZUMI-SAN...?
HIKARU-SAN!
L-LET'S LOOK AGAIN! WE'LL GET EVERYONE TO HELP!

K-CLICK
CLICK
!
OH LUCKY ME, TO GET YOU AS A SET.
YES! OKAY, I'M ON IT.
I'M SORRY, WORK'S BEEN CRAZY.
Come, on!
THAT'S NOT WHY WE'RE HERE!
YOU WOULDN'T GET OFF THE PHONE.
WE'RE NOT HERE AS A "SET"...DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG WE'VE BEEN WAITING?

YES... THAT'S IT!
HE PROBABLY GOT A SUDDEN CALL TO WORK.
IZUMI-SAN'S GOTTA HAVE A GOOD REASON FOR DISAPPEARING WITHOUT TELLING YOU OR ME, YASUKUNI-SAN.
HUH!? WHERE'RE WE GOING?
YANK
OKAY!
NOW, LET'S GO!!
I KNOW WHERE TO LOOK NEXT...

THE TRUTH IS I'VE ASKED IZUMI-CHAN TO GO INTO HIDING.
GO INTO HIDING?
SOME JOURNALISTS WERE SNOOPING AROUND HIS RECORDS.
I THOUGHT IT WAS BEST FOR HIM TO PLEAD A SUDDEN ILLNESS AND GO INTO SECLUSION.
PHEW...
I... I SEE.

U-UM, DO YOU KNOW WHERE IZUMI-SAN IS?
HE WASN'T IN HIS ROOM THIS MORNING...
DID HE SUDDENLY GET CALLED OUT ON A JOB OR SOMETHING?
!
OH...THAT'S RIGHT. I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING I FORGOT TO TELL YOU.
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN DEALING WITH ALL MORNING.
HAVE A SEAT AND I'LL EXPLAIN.
DON'T WORRY, IZUMI-CHAN'S PERFECTLY FINE.

AND THE PRODUCER SATAKE REQUESTED YOU.
YOU THINK I CAN BE HIS STAND-IN AFTER LOSING THE AUDITION!?
WELL, BY "PLACE" I JUST MEANT THAT PAIRING PROJECT.
NOBODY'LL ACCEPT IT!
WELL, THE SPONSORS SAID THEY'LL OKAY ANYONE APPROVED BY THE PRODUCERS.
SO CALL ME PRODUCER SATAKE.
I'M TAKING COMPLETE CONTROL OF THIS PROJECT.

PFFFT!
DO YOU THINK THAT STARTING TODAY, YOU COULD TAKE IZUMI-CHAN'S PLACE?
AND THERE'S ONE MORE THING...
Ugh!
RIGHT, YASU-KUNI-SAN!?
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HE SHOULD HAVE TOLD US!
IT WAS ALL VERY SUDDEN!
Y-YOU'RE SO MEAN, HIKARU-CHAN! SNIFFLE SNIFFLE
HACK
HACK
COUGH
WH-WHAT'RE YOU THINKING!?
OF COURSE, I CAN'T!!

Series Announcement Sept 30th
IN THE AUDITION, SHE WAS THE MOST TALENTED AFTER UEDA.
DUE TO KIDO'S SUDDEN ILLNESS, TAKABAYASHI'S AGREED TO STAND IN FOR HER.
I'M EXPECTING TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO.
AND IZUMI-CHAN CAN COME BACK IN NO TIME!
HIKARU-CHAN, IF YOU CAN BUY ME SOME TIME I'LL FIGURE OUT HOW TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA.
MEMORY
THIS PROJECT'S DOOMED!!
I KNEW I COULDN'T DO THIS !!
E... EXPECTING...? TALK ABOUT PRESSURE...
Y... YESSIR.
WHAT'S THIS PRODUCER THINKING?
And I thought the audition was hard...
IS HE BLIND?
RUDE

Series Announcement Sept 30th
NOW, TO INTRODUCE THE TWO PERFORMERS.
...THIS SERIES IS ALREADY UNDERWAY. ALL WE HAVE TO DO NOW IS A GOOD JOB.
I'M SURE LOTS OF PEOPLE WILL BE CONFUSED BY THE SUDDEN CHANGE, BUT...
CLAP CLAP CLAP
I'M AI UEDA.
I'M HIKARU TAKABAYASHI. BEST REGARDS.
DOOM
I'M JUST A NEWBIE WHO DOESN'T KNOW RIGHT FROM LEFT, BUT I'LL DO MY BEST.
WHOA.. THEY'RE GIVING ME A WHOLE "WHO'S THIS FREAK?" LOOK..
SILENCE
?

YASUKUNI-SAN! YOU WAITED FOR ME!?
OF COURSE.
IT'S MY JOB TO PROTECT YOU, HIKARU-SAN, WHILE IZUMI-SAMA'S AWAY.
GOOD WORK, HIKARU-SAN.
AND...
AH! THERE! IT'S THAT GIRL!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
TMP
TMP
TMP
WAIT A SECOND, YOUNG LADY!
YOU CAN'T LET DOWN YOUR GUARD WITH HIM.
I'M NOT SURE I REALLY TRUST THAT COMPANY PRESIDENT AKIZUKI.

STANDING IN FOR IZUMI-SAN...?
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN DO IT...
Izumi-san's so good...
WHY? IT'S SAD THAT KIDO-SAN'S ILL, BUT...
...I'M GLAD I GET TO WORK WITH YOU, TAKABA-YASHI-SAN.
I'M SORRY... YOU HAVE TO DEBUT WITH THE LIKES OF ME...
OH! UEDA-SAN. R-RIGHT.
BEST REGARDS FROM NOW ON.
THANKS, UEDA-SAN.

AH! WAIT!
SHIT
Tch!
VROOOM
HUH...?
YASU-KUNI-SAN, DID YOU HEAR THAT!?
LET'S GO BACK TO THE OFFICE.

N-NO.
DO YOU KNOW WHY IZUMI-CHAN REALLY DROPPED OUT?
HIKARU-SAN, THIS WAY.
HUH?
HEY, YOU'RE IZUMI-CHAN'S STAND-IN ON THAT SERIES, RIGHT?
HURRY INTO THE CAR.
O-OKAY.
WHAT'S HAPPENING? DID THEY ANNOUNCE HIS SUDDEN ILLNESS?
HEY, YOU!
CAN YOU CONFIRM OR DENY RUMORS THAT IZUMI KIDO-CHAN IS A GUY?

THE TRUTH IS, THE SCANDAL CAN ONLY HELP THE SERIES.
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT!?
IZUMI-CHAN'S NOT COMING BACK.
WE HAVE TO STOP THOSE RUMORS!
IZUMI-SAN WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO COME BACK!
HE NEVER WAS.
THAT DOESN'T MATTER.
HUH...?

HOW CAN IT BE...?
WHERE COULD THAT RUMOR HAVE COME FROM?
Yes, Akizuki Productions speaking...
PRRR PRRR PRRR
No, that's not true...
EVERY TIME THEY ASK A QUESTION, HIKARU-CHAN, JUST IGNORE THEM.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
JUST DO YOUR BEST WORK WITH NO WORRIES, HIKARU-CHAN.
AS LONG AS IZUMI KIDO STAYS HIDDEN, THEY'LL STAY FOOLED.
DON'T WORRY.

...TO GO OFF SOMEWHERE!
...AND LEAVE US BEHIND...
HE WOULDN'T KEEP US IN THE DARK...
IF IT GETS OUT THAT HE'S A GUY, EVERYONE AROUND HIM WILL SUFFER.
THE TRUTH IS IZUMI-CHAN'S SECRET IS IN DANGER.
HOW-EVER.
QUIT BABBLING! JUST ADMIT THAT YOU'RE SAVING YOUR OWN HIDE...
WELL, THAT'S TRUE TOO.
...BY GETTING RID OF IZUMI-SAMA!
BUT... THAT'S NOT THE ONLY REASON IZUMI-CHAN ALSO CHOSE TO DIS-APPEAR.
EVEN FOR THE SAKE OF EVERYONE HE WORKS WITH?

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!?
SLAM
.....!
YOU HEARD ME...
LIKE I SAID, IZUMI-CHAN'S DISAPPEARED.
AND HE WILL NOT COME BACK UNTIL HE'S READY.
YOU'RE LYING...
IZUMI-SAN .. WOULD NEVER DO THAT!

HABAKURO-SAN, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?

Ha ha ha!
AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, THERE'S NO PROOF AT ALL.
WHAT!?
RUMOR HAS IT THAT IZUMI-CHAN IS ACTUALLY A GUY.
IRE
IRE
I GUESS THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS ON A SLOW NEWS DAY.
AS TWO OF IZUMI-CHAN'S CLOSEST ASSOCIATES, WHAT CAN YOU TELL US?

REGARDING HOW SUCH A RUMOR GOT STARTED IN THE WAKE OF IZUMI-CHAN'S SUDDEN ILLNESS...
AS YOU HEARD...
...A TABLOID PHOTO OF A JUNIOR HIGH CLASS PHOTO SHOWS A MALE STUDENT WHO BEARS A REMARKABLE RESEMBLANCE TO IZUMI-CHAN...
...IZUMI-CHAN'S INNER CIRCLE IS LAUGHING IT OFF, SAYING IT'S JUST A LIE.

BUT, MORE THAN ANY-THING ...
...FOR HIKARU-CHAN'S FUTURE...
I THINK IT WAS FOR BOTH OF YOU.
FOR... ME...?

TELL TAKABA-YASHI-SAN...
...TO GET THESE RUMORS SQUASHED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
...UNDER-STOOD.
EVERY-ONE.
Y-YES?

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT MY UNCLE DIED!?

BECAUSE YOU ARE RELATED. WE'RE LUCKY THE MEDIA HASN'T FOUND YOU.
IF THEY TRACE HIS HISTORY THROUGH YOU...
IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE HIS COUSIN
TAKABA-YASHI-SAN GOT TO GO, BUT I'M HIS COUSIN FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!

WHSPR
WHSPR
I WONDER IF IT'S TRUE.
NO WAY.
CHATTER
CHATTER
IT SEEMS A FIRST-YEAR MEMBER OF THAT CLASS SAW IZUMI-CHAN AND SAID SHE LOOKED A LOT LIKE THIS A-KUN.

WHSPR
WHSPR
SH!
BUT THEY WERE REALLY CLOSE SO, YOU DON'T THINK...
IF ONE WAS A GUY, THE OTHER WOULD HAVE NOTICED!
IZUMI-SAN AND TAKABA-YASHI-SAN WERE ROOM-MATES, WEREN'T THEY?
YOU CALL YOURSELVES GIRLS OF SEIKA! GOSSIP IS NOT ONE OF THE FEMININE VIRTUES OF OLD JAPAN.
THAT BETTER NOT BE GOSSIP I'M HEARING!

IF ANY-THING HAPPENS TO IZUMI-CHAN...
...I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU!!
AYUMU-SAMA!
DASH
ZAFF
HIKARU-SAN!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO WHAT AKIZUKI SAYS ANYMORE!
I'LL LET WORK KNOW I'LL BE IN TOMORROW, AND THEN I'M GOING TO BED, TOO.
YOU GET SOME REST, YASUKUNI-SAN...
THAT WOULD CAUSE TROUBLE FOR UEDA-SAN AND EVERYONE. I'M...GOING TO GO.
BUT...

AYUMU-SAMA, PLEASE STOP.
TAKABAYASHI-SAN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
YOU WERE IZUMI-CHAN'S CLOSEST FRIEND!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT!? HIS SECRET IS OUT!
WE... DON'T KNOW EITHER.
.....!
.....
AYUMU-CHAN...
WHERE'S IZUMI-CHAN!? TELL ME!

OKAY...
AFTER THAT, YOU'VE GOT LESSONS WITH UEDA-SAN, AND THEN YOU'LL BE IN THE STUDIO AT NIGHT.
TOMORROW AFTERNOON THERE'S A MAGAZINE PHOTO SHOOT.
ABOUT GREETING THE SPONSORS, YOU--
STOP THE CAR!
HUH!?

I THINK IF IT WERE IZUMI-SAN... HE'D...SAY THE SAME THING.
IZUMI-SAN...
I UNDER-STAND.
I'LL GO WITH YOU.
WHAT IS THIS?
...MY HEART FEELS LIKE IT'S PARALYZED.
SOMEHOW...

SPLASH
HEY! WATCH OUT!
BUMP
...!
OOF!
IZUMI-SAN!!
IZUMI-SA--
GASP
!

BAH
SKREECH
WAI--! HIKARU-CHAN!?
IZUMI-SAN!
IZUMI-SAN, WAIT!!
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?
EXCUSE ME, COMING THROUGH.

WHAT DID HE MEAN "FOR MY SAKE"?
IZUMI-SAN.
ALL I'VE DONE SO FAR IS HIDE BEHIND OTHER PEOPLE.
SO NOW I'M AFRAID OF GOING ON BY MYSELF.
WHAT A JOKE...
IZUMI-SAN'S GONE.
BUT I CAN'T STOP LOOKING FOR HIM.
I'M CHASING AFTER SHADOWS...
I'M SO STUPID...

WHAT AM I DOING? I'M COVERED IN MUD...
I DUNNO ...
SHE KNOW YOU?

HIKARU-SAN, ARE YOU OKAY?

HIKARU-SAN?
I'M GOING TO TRY HARD AT THIS JOB. I'LL GIVE IT MY ALL.
AND I'LL BECOME FAMOUS.
THEN ALL THROUGH JAPAN... AND ALL THROUGH THE WORLD...
?
YASUKU-NI-SAN, I'VE COME TO A CON-CLUSION...

RE
HERE WE GO!!
THERE'S NO WAY...
...I'M FORGIVING HIM!

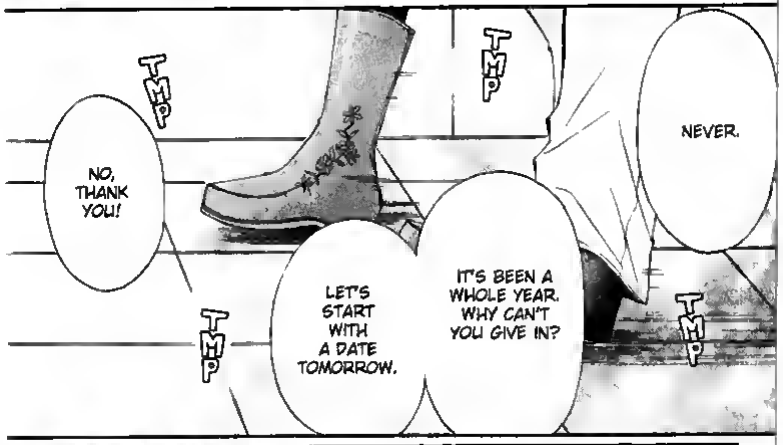
AND IF I EVER FIND IZUMI-SAN, I'M GOING TO KNOCK HIS LIGHTS OUT...
...SO DON'T TRY TO PROTECT HIM!
OKAY...

AND I'LL WHACK HIS BUTT A HUNDRED TIMES.
I'LL COUNT THEM FOR YOU.

...NO MATTER HOW FAR IZUMI-SAN RUNS...
...I'LL BE SO FAMOUS HE WON'T BE ABLE TO FORGET ME.

TENSHI JA NAI!!
I LOV
天使じゃない!!
SCENE 40

NO MATTER WHAT...
HERE WE GO!!
...I'M GOING TO GET HIM!!
End of Scene 39



A Relaxing Trip (4)

Just when will this long-winded vacation journal end? (sweat)... The next morning, after a certain group of characters made a pass at me, we ate during a rather high-tension breakfast. Then we strolled through Ikebukuro, ate as we walked, and made it back home safely. Talk about anti-climactic...(^^) So to both my assistants and all you who read this far: good job and thanks!

HIKARU
HIKARU
I WONDER IF HE'S SEEN IT, TOO...

SHUT
GOOD WORK TODAY.
YASUKU-NI-SAN, IF YOU'D BE SO KIND.
OH... I SEE. IT'S THAT TIME AL-READY...
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE, HABASHI?
Want some takoyaki?
*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES
VROOOM

THE "STELLA" DUO.
HIKARU-CHAN, YOU'VE GOT LESSONS IN THE MORNING, AND THEN WORK.
YESSIR.
WHAT ABOUT THE RUMOR? THAT SHE'S A GUY?
DO YOU HAVE ANY NEWS ABOUT IZUMI KIDO-CHAN AND HER ILL-NESS?

Project Press Conference Hall
LET ME INTRODUCE THE LIMITED-TIME PAIRING DOING THIS PROJECT.
THE NAME OF THE SERIES ...
...COMES FROM THE WORD FOR "STAR."
ALLOW ME TO PRE-SENT...

ONE YEAR AGO, WHEN IZUMI-SAN DISAPPEARED...

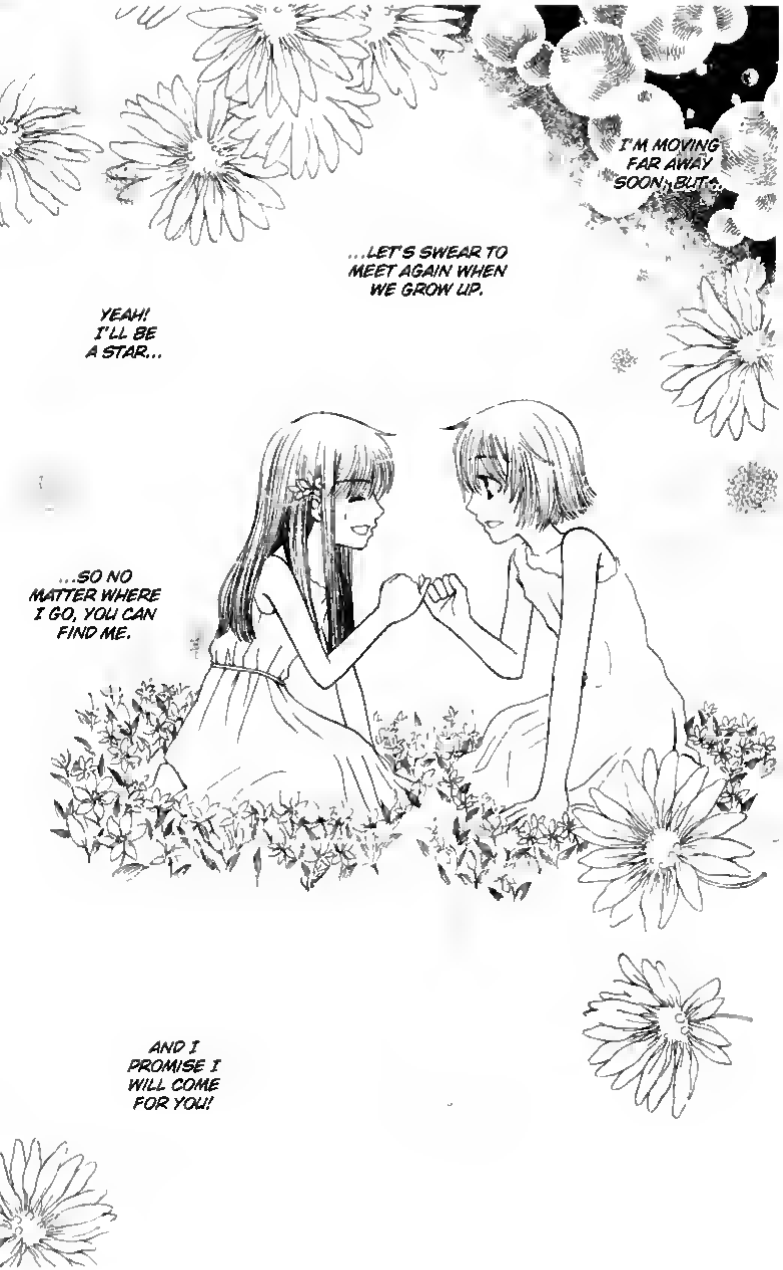
...I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, BUT I THREW MYSELF INTO WORK AND FIGURED IT OUT FOR MY-SELF...

Is that promise still good?

VROOOM
JUST LIKE I PROMISED...
...I'M DOING MY BEST.

HIKARU-SAN, HURRY! YOU'VE GOT AN INTERVIEW THIS AFTERNOON.
OKAY!
I'M SURE...

...THAT IF I HADN'T FOUND THAT PHOTO, I'D HAVE COLLAPSED.
WHAT'S THIS PHOTO DOING HERE...?


I'M MOVING FAR AWAY SOON, BUT...
...LET'S SWEAR TO MEET AGAIN WHEN WE GROW UP.
YEAH! I'LL BE A STAR...
...SO NO MATTER WHERE I GO, YOU CAN FIND ME.
AND I PROMISE I WILL COME FOR YOU!

VROOOM
7h
HIKARU
IT'S A PROMISE.

SO HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE GRADUATING!?
POINT
!
MOMO-CHI-SAN.
HEH HEH.
TH-THANKS ...
WE'LL ALWAYS BE CHEERING YOU ON, HIKARU-SAMA!
SOB SNIFFLE
ME TOO!
LET'S TAKE A PHOTO AFTER-WARDS.
CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTO-GRAPH, HIKARU-SAMA?
Hikaru Takahayashi's Unofficial Fanclub

PLEASE BE GENTLE WITH ME.
HIKARU-SAAAN!
AFTER I GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE, I'M GONNA BE A REPORTER AND STILL FOLLOW YOU AROUND, TAKABA-YASHI-SAN.
SO WISH ME LUCK!

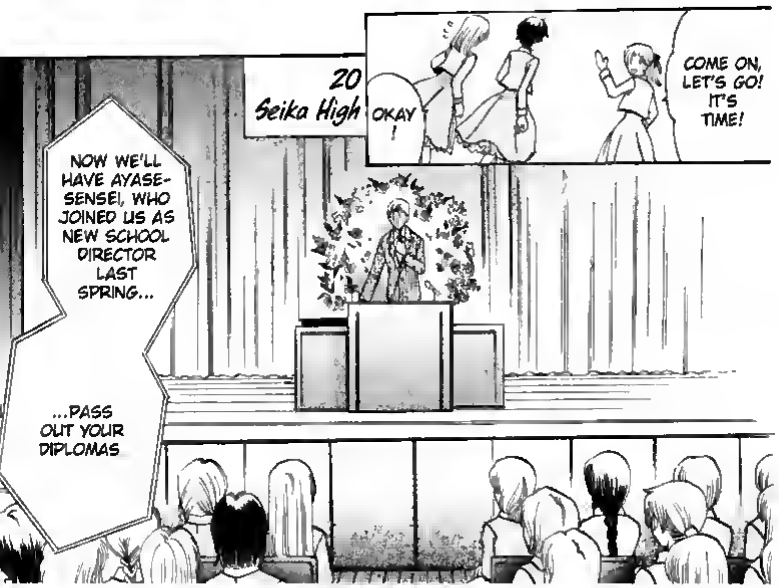
CHATTER
CHATTER
Seika Girl's Academy Graduation Ceremony

SOB
SOB
SNIFFLE
SNIFFLE
WE'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU.
I-I'LL MISS YOU TOO.

THAT GIRL'S THE TRUE PRIDE OF SEIKA!
IT'S TOUGH BEING POPULAR.
HMPH!
THANKS CHISATO-SAN. YOU SAVED ME!
THIS YEAR, SHE'S MOSTLY DONE TV DRAMAS AND COMMER-CIALS...
...SHE AND THE TOP IDOL, AI UEDA, ARE A DOUBLE THREAT!
All You Wanted to Know About Hikaru Takahashi
BUT, SHE HAS STAYED SO HUMBLE...
aman

WE'RE UP SOON.
OH, RIGHT CHISATO-SAN!
Phew!
SNIFFLE
THIS IS THE LAST TIME WE'LL SEE THE FOUR FLOWER QUEENS OF SEIKA HIGH ALL TOGETHER...
NO! THE MOST MISSED WILL BE WHITE ROSE THAT IS HIKARU-SAMA!
I'LL MISS THE SEVERE AND DIGNI-FIED KIKYO-SAMA MOST.
THE SUNFLOWER THAT IS MICHIRU-SAMA... SO SAD...!
THE GRACEFUL AND WHITE LILY OF A GIRL, CHISATO-SAMA...

I WISH IZUMI-SAN COULD HAVE GRADUATED WITH US.
CHISATO-SAN...
YEAH... I AGREE.


20
Seika High
COME ON, LET'S GO! IT'S TIME!
OKAY!
NOW WE'LL HAVE AYASE-SENSEI, WHO JOINED US AS NEW SCHOOL DIRECTOR LAST SPRING...
...PASS OUT YOUR DIPLOMAS

AFTER A FEW HOURS, MAKE SURE YOU DON'T DISILLUSION THE UNDER-CLASSMAN.

I SWEAR, YOU'RE AS BIG A SUCKER AS EVER!
Y... YOU GOT ME...
IZUKI-SAN...

DILLING
DOOONG

AFTER JUST A FEW HOURS, EH...?
DILLING
DOOONG
DOOONG

HE SAID WE'D MAKE TONS OF MEMORIES TOGETHER...
...AND GRADUATE WITH ME, TOO.
THAT FOOL, IZUMI-SAN.
HIKARU TAKABAYASHI.
BUT BY MYSELF...
STUMBLE
BUMBLE
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
AH... Y-YES!
HIKARU-SAN...
HEH HEH

...AND ARE RECEIVING THIS AS PROOF OF THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT.
FOR YOUR DIPLOMAS...
...THE NAMES CALLED ARE THOSE WHO COMPLETED THE PRESCRIBED CURRICULUM AT THIS SCHOOL...
IF ONLY IZUMI-SAN WERE HERE...
CLAP
CLAP
AKARI KATO.
CONGRATULATIONS ON GRADUATING.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

WAAAH!
!?
CLAP
Hikaru-chaaan!
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
Hikaru-samaaaa!
FOR THESE PAST THREE YEARS...
...THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
AH...

GOOD LUCK FROM NOW ON, TOO.
...AH.
CONGRATULATIONS ON GRADUATING.
YES!
BOW

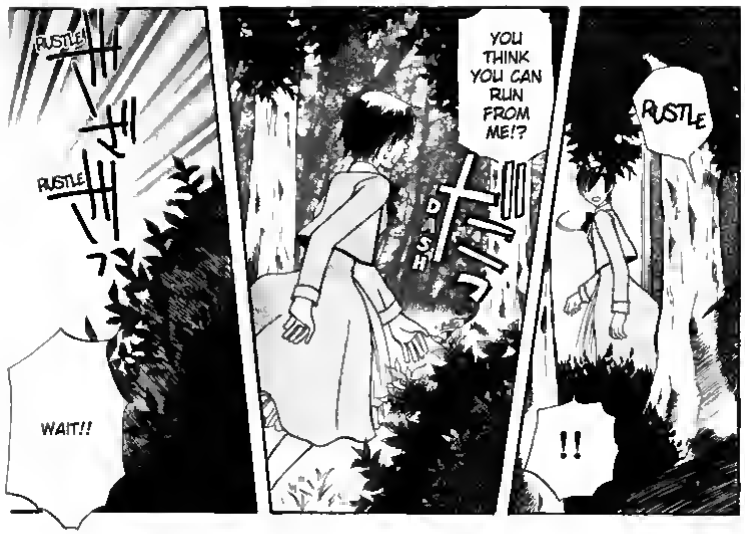
THAT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN...!?
DASH
TAKABA-YASHI!?
DTMP

BAH
CHATTER
CHATTER
WHAT JUST HAPPENED!?
WHO KNOWS...?
CHATTER
CHATTER
HIKARU-SAN?

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
WHAT IS IT, TAKABA-YASHI?
IT COULDN'T BE...

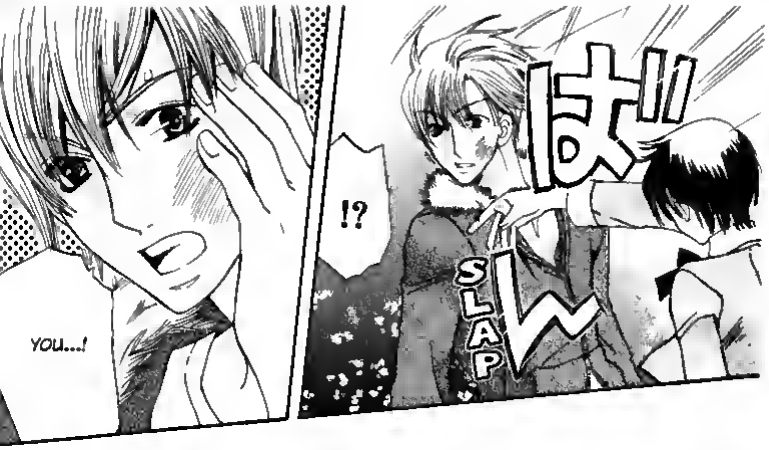
RUSTLE
PANT
PANT
THAT WAY IS THE CLEARING BEHIND THE HILL...
!!

IZUMI-SAN!?


RUSTLE
RUSTLE
WAIT!!
YOU THINK YOU CAN RUN FROM ME!?
DASH
RUSTLE
!!

...YO.

THADUMP
THADUMP
THADUMP
IS THAT... IZUMI-SAN?
HE'S... TALLER...
AND HE'S A LITTLE BIGGER.
IZUMI... -SAN?
BUT...


YOU...!
!?
SLAP
ばっ

YOU IDIOT!! WHERE'VE YOU BEEN ALL THIS TIME!?
LEAVING US WITHOUT A WORD...!
WE WERE SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU...!

I DIDN'T INTEND FOR YOU TO FIND ME, YET.

NOW I'M IZUMI MIYAKAWA... IT'S MY MOM'S MAIDEN NAME.
IS IT REALLY YOU, IZUMI-SAN?
HELLO ...?

...SEEING YOU FIND YOUR DREAM AND WORK SO HARD FOR IT...
THIS MIGHT SEEM CONCEITED BUT...
...GOT ME THINKING AS A GUY THAT I WAS NO GOOD STAYING THAT WAY.
WITH MY FATHER DEAD, THERE WAS NO POINT IN MY BEING A CELEBRITY AS A GIRL.
I NEEDED TO BE ALONE TO FIND MY OWN DREAM.
JUST HOW LONG WERE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME WAIT!?
That would have taken too long!
MY PLAN WAS TO BECOME A FIRST-RATE ARCHITECT, AND THEN COME GET YOU.
AND DID YOU?

I'M SORRY.
HUG
I WAS A MESS AFTER MY FATHER'S DEATH. I WAS SO CONFUSED.
AKIZUKI FORBADE ME FROM SAYING ANYTHING.
YOU DIDN'T SAY ONE THING TO US...
HIKARU...

I'M BACK.
WELCOME HOME!
ANY WAY... I COULDN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE, SO HERE I AM.

IZUMI-SAMA...
LONG TIME NO SEE, YASU-KUNI.
AH! YASUKUNI-SAN!! IZUMI-SAN'S BACK!
See?
EVERYONE HAS BEEN SO WORRIED!
IZUMI-SAN, COME!
I'M SORRY! I'M REALLY SORRY!!
SOB
H...HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH ...
SCRATCH SCRATCH
Stop crying!

ZAH
IZUMI-SAMA !!

I DON'T HAVE MY WINGS ANYMORE.
I GAVE THEM ALL TO YOU.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
I'VE ALWAYS SEEN THE WINGS ON YOUR BACK, IZUMI-SAN.
ONE WING.
AND WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THAT? I CAN'T FLY.
YES, YOU CAN.

L-LISTEN, I'M NOT IZUMI KIDO ANYMORE, REMEMBER?
SO, WHAT? YOU'RE GRADUATING.
IF THE MEDIA COMES, WE'LL ACT IGNORANT UNTIL THEY GIVE UP AND LEAVE.
RIGHT, YASU-KUNI-SAN?
SOB SOB
I'M NOT A BIRD, SO IT'S NOT LIKE I'LL FLY AWAY.
COME ON!! LET'S MOVE IT!!
I DON'T CARE! I'M NOT LETTING YOU OUT OF MY SIGHT!
W-WHOA! I GOT IT, I WON'T RUN AWAY ANYMORE!

Afterword & Special Thanks

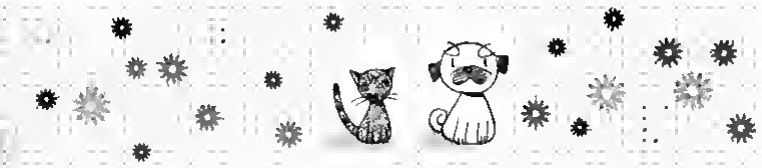
To everyone who read "Tenshi Ja Nai!!" volume 8, thank you very much! Thanks to everyone's support, "Tenshi Ja Nai!!" was able to make it to the last chapter. It's because of everyone out there reading it that Hikaru and Izumi's tale was able to came to a conclusion, I believe. I really, really am grateful to you!

Also, to my manager Sugiwara-san who supported me in both the public and private spheres, as well as my assistants Hariguchi-san and Hatayama-san: thank you and best regards from now on, too.

Now, in May of 2006, I've already started work on my next story. So that I can see all of you in my next work, I'm going to try my best from now on as well, so thank you very much!

Well, until we see each other again...

May 19, 2006 Takaka Shigematsu



I'm awaiting your letters.

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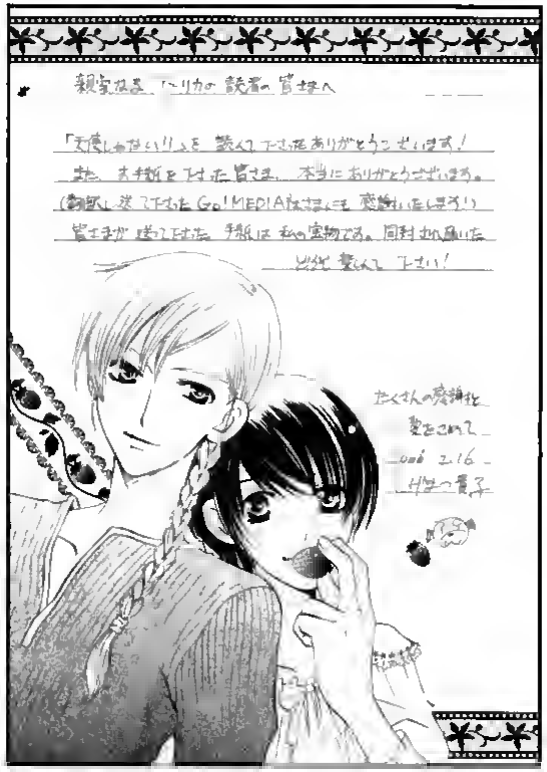
Postcard from the Manga-Ka



* To all my dear American readers,
Thank you for reading "Tenshi Ja Nai!!"!
My deepest gratitude to all of you who wrote me letters, too.
(Of course, I have Go! Media to thank for that – translating them and making them readable for me!)
I value everyone's fan letters like my most precious treasures.
And now my work desk is decorated with all the lovely fan art you included, too!
I hope you all enjoyed the ride!
With all my thanks and love,
February, 16, 2006
Shigematsu Takako

Translator's Notes

Pg. 43 – Queen-type (S)
In the world of S&M, it's the sadist position though in this situation he just means a girl who is assertive and even a little overbearing

Pg. 160 – *takoyaki*
Fried octopus dumplings that are a very popular and delicious snackfood

TENSHI JA NAI!!

Now that Hikaru's won a chance to star with Izumi in a mini-series, her troubles are just starting! She tries her best so she can be with Izumi, but it's a hard fight with plenty of obstacles! Will she make it? What will become of her and Izumi? Don't miss the amazing final volume!

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